

**Citation:** "Report of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Minority Housing," December 1962. Folder "Minority Housing," Box 14. Seattle Office of the Mayor Records, 5210-01. Seattle Municipal Archives.

**R E P O R T**  
of the  
**Citizens' Advisory Committee**  
on  
**Minority Housing**



**Members**

**Alfred J. Westberg, *Chairman***

<b>Robert Banks</b>	<b>James M. Matsuoka</b>
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**December, 1962**

**C O N T E N T S**

	<i>Page</i>
I. Minority Population Concentration . . . . .	3
II. Causes of Minority Concentration . . . . .	4
III. Effects of Housing Segregation . . . . .	5
IV. Community Attitudes . . . . .	7
V. Conclusions and Recommendations . . . . .	9
Minority Report . . . . .	12

**APPENDIX**

Research Material Made Available . . . . .	13
Organizations and Individuals Used as Resources . . . . .	15
Suggested Ordinance . . . . .	16

## I. Minority Population Concentration

From the reports received by the committee from various sources, and particularly from statistics taken from the United States Census of Housing for 1950 and 1960, it is abundantly evident that a definite minority housing area has developed in Seattle.

Speaking in this report about "minority" and "minorities", we are referring to non-white residents of Seattle. Material submitted indicated a limited degree of housing discrimination based on religion or creed. Committee recommendations hereafter stated are all-inclusive with reference to discrimination based upon the usual considerations referred to in legislation (race, creed, color and national origin).

Seattle population changes between 1950 and 1960 were as follows:

	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Negroes</i>	<i>Other Non-Whites</i>
*1950 . . . . .	524,875	15,666	11,501
1960 . . . . .	557,087	26,901	19,627
Growth in 10 years . . . .	32,212	11,235	8,126

\*Included in present area of city.

In spite of increasing population in all groups of residents in the last decade, the concentration of non-whites, particularly Negroes, has increased. In 1960 78 per cent of all Negroes and 52 per cent of all other non-whites lived in 10 of 118 census tracts into which the Census Bureau divided the City of Seattle.<sup>1</sup> At least one non-white resident was found in each of the 118 tracts. In all but 18 of the 1960 Census tracts at least one Negro resided. About three-fourths of all Negro residents lived in nine census tracts located in a four square mile area, east of the central business district of Seattle and extending to the west shore of Lake Washington. Almost 300 blocks within the city were three-fourths or more non-white. Thirty-eight of these blocks were 100 per cent non-white. A total of 220 additional blocks were approaching the 100 per cent non-white mark with three or fewer white dwelling units per block. These predominantly non-white blocks constituted 3 per cent of all blocks in the city and contained 42 per cent of the non-white population.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1950 and 1960 the proportion of the Seattle Negro population living in 10 census tracts increased from 69 per cent to 78 per cent. During the same period the actual number of Negroes residing in the 54 census tracts north of the Lake Washington Ship Canal actually decreased.

<sup>1</sup>Watson, Walter B. and Barth, Ernest A. T. Summary of recent research covering minority housing in Seattle. Department of Sociology, University of Washington, August 27, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Northwood, Dr. L. K. "An Assessment of the Negro Housing Market," Preliminary report. School of Social Work, University of Washington, October, 1962.



## **II. Causes of Minority Concentration**

The present minority housing concentration is in an area which is an expansion of a Negro residential section established in the vicinity of 23rd and Madison about 1900. Expansion of this center resulted in a merger with a later Negro center which had developed in the Jackson Street area. Thus, to some degree, occupation of a Seattle minority housing area in Seattle has a historical background. Since this is one of the older residential areas in which 87 per cent of the housing was built prior to 1940, low purchase prices and low rentals doubtless appeal to minority persons, many of whose incomes fall below average earnings for the citizens as a whole. Prices and rents charged in this area are generally equal to or higher than those charged for similar accommodations elsewhere. However, 4,297 non-white household heads who reside in the minority area reported in 1960 that they owned homes worth more than \$10,000 or paid rent in excess of \$100 per month.<sup>3</sup>

Studies and reports submitted to the committee contain numerous references indicating that non-white residents are more cognizant of discrimination in housing in the City of Seattle than is the white majority. This is natural. At the committee's hearing, reference was made to numerous specific instances of discrimination. Without exception, every organization operating in the field of race relations which appeared at the hearing, or made recommendations, stated positively that discrimination against non-whites exists in the housing field generally in predominantly white neighborhoods throughout the city. Your committee has concluded unanimously that a serious problem exists in the City of Seattle in the availability of housing for rent or sale to members of minority groups by reason of discrimination.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

### III. Effects of Housing Segregation

Concentration of minority population, particularly Negroes, is reaching such proportions as to have a significant bearing upon other phases of community life. Not only are the minority residents of the community affected, but conditions also significantly affect the lives of the white majority. Discrimination in the availability of housing, artificially confining the minority group and depriving them of absolute freedom in the choice of housing within their financial capabilities, has a myriad both of direct and side effects upon the life of the entire community. A great deal could be said and written on this subject. It is the committee's opinion that the segregated pattern of housing in Seattle is causing, or contributing to the cause of, the following conditions, all of which are injurious to the community as a whole.

1. *Overcrowded housing.* In October, 1961, the United Good Neighbor Fund of Seattle and King County received a report of its committee on the Leschi and 3-M areas. The 3-M area includes the elementary school areas of Madison, Madrona and Minor. The report shows that, between 1950 and 1960, overcrowded housing units occupied by non-white families increased from 354 to 564. During the same period, the number occupied by white families decreased from 425 units to 141 in the 3-M area. In the Leschi area, in the same period of time, overcrowded dwelling units occupied by white families dropped from 183 to 55, while those occupied by non-whites increased from 115 to 328.<sup>4</sup>

Overcrowding results in excessive occupancy of substandard housing units which under normal conditions would be forced off the housing market or repaired. A substandard unit is a dilapidated unit, or a sound but deteriorating unit lacking some or all plumbing facilities. In 1960, more than 3,000 dwelling units in Seattle, which were occupied by non-white families, were substandard by this definition. All but 219 were occupied by tenants.<sup>5</sup>

2. *Juvenile Delinquency.* Overcrowded and substandard living conditions do not encourage the development of good family life, civic responsibility, good neighborliness or healthy and happy conditions in which to raise children. Such conditions foster juvenile delinquency and increase fire and health hazards. Juvenile delinquency is likewise an indirect result of housing segregation because such segregation adversely influences the functioning of the educational system and the stimulus it should provide to the young people.

3. *De Facto School Segregation.* An important direct effect of discrimination in housing is de facto school segregation. This already exists in the City of Seattle. Although half of Seattle's elementary schools (42 out of 86) had no Negro pupils in 1957, 88 per cent of the Negro elementary school children were concentrated in 11 grade schools. Two out of 14 of the junior high schools contained 87 per cent of the Negro junior high school pupils. Eighty per cent of the Negro school children attended a single high school out of the nine in the school district. At that

<sup>4</sup>Planning Division, United Good Neighbors of Seattle and King County. Report on Leschi and 3-M Areas. Approved October 31, 1961.

<sup>5</sup>Potter, Allen. "Housing for Non-Whites." Planning Division, United Good Neighbors of Seattle and King County, April 18, 1961.

time (1957) seven elementary schools in the city had more than 70 per cent non-white pupils. One junior high school had 79 per cent non-white. The senior high school, which served the minority housing areas, had 51.9 per cent non-white pupils. The highest of the remaining eight high schools had 9.1 per cent non-white.<sup>6</sup>

Heavy concentration of pupils from substandard and overcrowded homes, particularly those students who are members of groups which suffer from discriminatory practices in housing and perhaps in other respects, overburdened these schools with serious problems. Thirteen schools in the Seattle district experience excessive suspension rates, an indication of social problems facing school personnel. Eight are in the minority housing area.

Representatives from the schools in public statements and private conversations have indicated that residential segregation of non-whites severely complicates the educational process, and necessitates a variety of administrative adjustments to cope with the problem. Furthermore a recent study of language behavior indicated that Negro students in Seattle were handicapped in their educational efforts by language difficulties which were directly related to the fact that they have been living in a Ghetto area.<sup>7</sup>

4. *Unemployment.* An important side effect of segregated housing and resulting de facto segregation of schools relates to the employability of the children leaving school. These are youth whose background and education has been adversely affected by the conditions above described, and is particularly noticeable with reference to the Negro children. In 1957, 3,994 Negro children were attending elementary schools, and representing 6.8 per cent of the total senior high school population. In contrast 591 Negro children were attending senior high school. They represented only 3.8 per cent of the total senior high school population.

Part of the cause is the fact that Negro children, who are disproportionately "disadvantaged" by segregated patterns of living and school attendance, leave school earlier than do other students. Discrimination in employment also tends to deprive Negro children of stimulus to complete their education. As a result, they are qualified only for low wages and irregular employment, and they are likely to be afflicted with these adversities for the rest of their lives. Lack of job opportunities for those who have completed school has an adverse effect on students and their motivation to stay in school. Therefore it is not surprising that the minority housing area includes a higher ratio of persons on public assistance than does any other area in the city.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Schmid, Calvin and Miller, Vincent A. "Population Trends and Educational Change in the State of Washington 1960."

<sup>7</sup>Watson, Walter B. and Barth, Ernest A. T. Summary of recent research covering minority housing in Seattle. Department of Sociology, University of Washington, August 27, 1962.

<sup>8</sup>Planning Division, United Good Neighbors of Seattle and King County. Report on Leschi and 3-M Areas. Approved October 31, 1961.

## IV. Community Attitudes

In presenting the foregoing brief summary of the masses of materials submitted, the committee obviously has been able to cover only high spots. It has received statistics, research reports, persuasive arguments and recommendations from the impressive number of organizations and individuals who are on the attached list.

The United Good Neighbors of Seattle and King County, and the agencies operating in the race relations field to whose support it contributes, have produced large quantities of information over a period of years. All of this information supports the foregoing factual statements and the conclusion of your committee. In spite of all that has been done, the City of Seattle is still afflicted with the conditions described. In addition to incalculable affronts to human dignity, adversities in living conditions, health risks, sacrifices in educational standards, and handicapped lives experienced by the thousands who are the direct victims of discriminatory practices, the whole community suffers. These conditions result in a tremendous waste of human resources and greater burdens to the taxpayers, through loss of efficiency in educational functions, increased law enforcement problems, and welfare costs. In the immediate future, construction of freeways and urban renewal projects will demand that segregation in housing through discriminatory practices be eliminated in the City of Seattle. Members of Seattle minority groups believe that housing discrimination is one of two most important problems facing this community.

The committee believes that Seattle, with the assistance of a definite official city policy declaration and a publicly-supported and staffed city agency will recognize the necessity of, and will accept an active remedial program for, the elimination of discrimination in housing. In 1962, Ruel S. Amdur of the University of Washington, wrote an unpublished thesis entitled "An exploratory study of 19 Negro families in the Seattle area who were first Negro residents in white neighborhoods." In his study, Mr. Amdur draws the following conclusion:

- A. Negroes seeking housing outside of the predominantly Negro areas of the city are forced to utilize a variety of unusual techniques to secure the houses they desire.
- B. Negro home seekers find that their access to the normal sources of information on housing is blocked, and that therefore they have to make use of a variety of time-consuming devices.
- C. In several cases, Negro respondents reported experiencing the active opposition of professional real estate people in their attempts to purchase housing in all white areas.
- D. Although a few of the Negro respondents experienced hostility from their neighbors when they first moved in, it almost never took the form of overt violence and usually disappeared within a short period of time.



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The City of Seattle is not the only American city facing these problems. By 1959, local, official, public, tax-supported staffed agencies to deal with problems of human relations had been established in the following cities:<sup>9</sup>

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| *San Francisco, California | *Toledo, Ohio               |
| *Denver, Colorado          | *Erie, Pennsylvania         |
| Gary, Indiana              | *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania   |
| *Des Moines, Iowa          | *Milwaukee, Wisconsin       |
| Baltimore, Maryland        | *Los Angeles, California    |
| Cambridge, Massachusetts   | *New Haven, Connecticut     |
| Grand Rapids, Michigan     | Washington, D.C.            |
| Minneapolis, Minnesota     | *Chicago, Illinois          |
| *St. Paul, Minnesota       | *Boston, Massachusetts      |
| Kansas City, Missouri      | Detroit, Michigan           |
| *St. Louis, Missouri       | Elmira, New York            |
| Elizabeth, New Jersey      | *New York City              |
| Newark, New Jersey         | Syracuse, New York          |
| Patterson, New Jersey      | *Cleveland, Ohio            |
| Buffalo, New York          | Youngstown, Ohio            |
| *Cincinnati, Ohio          | *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Columbus, Ohio             |                             |

\*These cities have enacted resolutions or ordinances prohibiting discrimination in housing. Some, however, are quite limited in application.

It was stated at the committee's hearing that the City of Seattle is almost the only northern city of its size without a publicly-supported and staffed commission on human relations.

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<sup>9</sup>National Association of Intergroup Relations Organizations. *Directory of Intergroup Relations Agencies*. 1959. New York, New York.



## **V. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Your committee has concluded that a city ordinance prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing accommodations on the basis of race, creed, color or national origin is an essential tool for the work of a city commission on human relations. Almost all organizations and individuals operating in the race relations field from which the committee heard either in writing, or at the hearing, vigorously urged passage of such an ordinance. Only the Seattle Real Estate Board and the Apartment Operators Association of Seattle opposed it at the hearing.

The real estate board contends that it is a professional association whose members render a service to their clients who are the owners of property for sale or rent. The implication is that if the property owner desires to discriminate, the real estate broker is perforce required to do so or risk loss of listing of property upon which he depends to carry on his profession. The argument of the Apartment Operators Association is similar. It contends that the apartment house operator renting a unit to a minority family risks loss of other tenants who desire to discriminate against minority neighbors and who will move to a building in which no minorities reside.

Both organizations imply that they will suffer economic loss through discriminatory tendencies of customers and tenants, although their own members do not wish to discriminate against racial minorities. The committee feels that a general law prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing will tend to protect members of these groups from such economic loss since the law will apply to all persons alike, including tenants and customers as well as all other real estate brokers and apartment operators. Under proper application of such a law no property owner or a tenant should be able to find a discriminatory apartment operator or a discriminatory real estate broker with whom to do business. This point of view further supports the committee's conclusion that an all-inclusive open housing ordinance is necessary to guard those who wish to deal fairly, from retaliation or competition from the few who would prefer to discriminate.

Although a number of excellent privately-supported agencies in Seattle are carrying on a general educational and public relations program, seeking the voluntary elimination of discrimination in housing and other fields, they lack an official standing. Since each is an independent agency with policies controlled by its own board and officers, it is difficult to coordinate activities. The Washington State Board Against Discrimination is a state-wide agency created under a state law which establishes a state policy. Problems of minority groups are essentially urban problems. These must be handled locally with a specific focus upon existing local problems.

Therefore, your committee recommends the following:

1. Adoption of an ordinance by the city council and the mayor of the City of Seattle, prohibiting discrimination in the sale and rental of all public and private housing accommodations within the city on the basis of race, creed, color or national origin, however financed, and providing criminal penalties for violation.

2. The creation of a Seattle Human Rights Commission of at least 15 members to be appointed by the mayor, with the city council concurring. The commission should be authorized to receive and investigate complaints of ordinance violations, and attempt to eliminate discrimination by conciliation and persuasion. If it is found that the ordinance has been violated and if efforts at conciliation and persuasion fail, the commission should be authorized to issue orders requiring compliance. Failure to comply will be the basis for a criminal prosecution. Upon complaint of the commission, prosecution is to be carried forward through regular city law enforcement procedures.

The committee also has concluded that housing discrimination is only one aspect of discriminatory practices from which racial and religious minorities suffer in our city. The housing problem is of first importance and needs immediate attention, but the committee heard many references to discrimination in other areas of human activity. In the fairly recent past, claims have been made of discrimination in the use of publicly-owned recreation facilities. If the commission's duties are limited to enforcement of the open housing ordinance, in the future the city will no doubt be faced with requests for further studies and additional action relating to other aspects of discrimination.

The commission should have a continuing responsibility to study and report to the mayor and the city council on all phases of discrimination that it may find within the city, and to recommend remedial executive orders, resolutions or ordinances.

The commission also should be authorized to engage in public relations and educational efforts to encourage the reduction and elimination of discrimination in all human relationships. In these activities, an important commission function would be to encourage and cooperate with community organizations, federal, state and local agencies, and with Seattle citizens in general, in the development of participation and leadership. With the help of the Human Rights Commission, the Seattle School District, the urban renewal agency, park department, the police department, the juvenile court, the planning commission, the city engineer, the health and fire departments, and many other public and private agencies could make substantial contributions toward improvement in relationships.

To be effective in any way, the Human Rights Commission must have a staff and an annual budget. Without such tools, a volunteer commission would be unable to function. Therefore the committee recommends that the budget of the Human Rights Commission be included in the City of Seattle budget. We estimate initial requirements at \$50,000.00 per year.

The committee is of the opinion that a city ordinance containing the provisions outlined in recommendations 1 and 2 is within the legal powers of the City of Seattle to adopt and enforce. The committee has prepared a suggested form for such an ordinance. A copy is submitted with this report.

3. Pending passage of an ordinance for the purposes set forth in recommendations 1 and 2, the committee recommends the immediate establishment by the city for a municipal listing agency. This agency would receive listings for sale and rental of housing accommodations available for all occupants without dis-

crimination and make such lists available to applicants. This function could be handled appropriately by some existing city agency without significant expense. Its establishment should be accompanied by appropriate publicity to make it as broadly effective as possible.

Present and pending forced relocation of families living in areas where public improvements are now underway or planned makes establishment of this agency an immediate necessity. The committee wishes to point out, however, that establishment of a listing agency should not be considered as a complete solution to the problems found to be existing. Such action would serve only as to alleviate conditions until the establishment of the Human Rights Commission and passage of an effective open housing ordinance.

4. By resolution, the city council and the mayor of Seattle should support the proposed amendments to the state law against discrimination. The effectiveness of the present law, as it applies to housing accommodations, has been seriously impaired by the ruling of the Washington State Supreme Court in *O'Meara v. State Board Against Discrimination*, 58 W. 2d 793, decided September 29, 1961. Present proposed amendments have been drafted by the State Board Against Discrimination and endorsed by many intergroup and civil rights organizations, including the Civic Unity Committee, in an attempt to extend state law coverage and eliminate features of the former law held to be unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. Passage would further strengthen the operation of a Seattle Human Rights Commission by providing another arm of the government with which the commission could cooperate. The State Board Against Discrimination maintains an office in Seattle and has a staff which should be active in the processing of complaints in those areas of the housing industry falling within jurisdiction of the state law when adopted.

This report would not be complete without an expression of deep appreciation of the prompt responses received from the many organizations operating in Seattle which submitted reports and recommendations. The committee also is deeply grateful for the benefit of research and reports supplied by members of the faculties of the Department of Sociology and the Graduate School of Social Work of the University of Washington.

Attached is a list of research material considered by the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY HOUSING

Alfred J. Westberg, *Chairman*

Albert J. Feldman  
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James M. Matsuoka  
Claude Norris  
Theo M. Rosenblume

Rev. John Fitterer, S.J.  
Paul Green  
Mrs. Neil F. Thorlakson  
Victor Velasco  
Mrs. David L. Wing

The undersigned members of the committee approve the within and foregoing subject however to the attached Minority Report.

Robert Banks  
Ray J. DeBurgh

Harry B. Dye  
Carl Scheuch, Jr.

## Minority Report

We, as members of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Minority Housing, while in basic agreement with the preceding, feel it is our duty to present a minority report to clarify important areas of difference that are fundamental to our acceptance of the committee's report.

We question the wisdom of the majority of this committee, however desirous and eager they may be to take the lead in the development of open housing laws, to recommend local legislation in view of pending action by both the state and national governments, which could render ineffective any such ordinance we might recommend at this time. Therefore, it is our recommendation that the City of Seattle not enact an open housing ordinance at this time, and instead, establish both the Human Rights Commission and the Clearing Service with sufficient staff and budget to help correct the problem through guidance, education and conciliation.

If it is found after a reasonable length of time that action by either state or federal government has not alleviated the problem, we further recommend that the city consider such local legislation as may be necessary, drawing upon the experience of the Human Rights Commission as a basis to meet local needs.

A Human Rights Commission, as recommended by the committee, should be formed, but we question the propriety at this time of passing an ordinance which would force any owner to sell, rent or lease his property to a person or persons not of his own choice.

Excluding the preceding area of disagreement, there was unanimous agreement within the committee on the recognition of the minority housing problem, the need for creation of a Human Rights Commission with official status and staff to investigate, conciliate and coordinate efforts, and for the establishment of a Clearing Service to assist in the placement of minority families in suitable and available housing.

Robert Banks

Ray J. DeBurgh

Harry B. Dye

Carl Scheuch, Jr.